

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 065477

63

ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 IO-12 NIC-01 ACDA-19 DPW-01 OMB-01

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

UNCLAS STATE 065477

E. O. 11652

TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: APRIL 9 INDOCHINA PRESS SUMMARY

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 065477

1. ALL PAPERS FEATURE PP REPORTS STRESSING DETERIORATING POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SITUATION THROUGHOUT

CAMBODIA. NYT'S TREASTER REPORTS TWO TANKERS IN FIVE-SHIP CONVOY THAT ARRIVED SUNDAY BROUGHT ONLY SIX DAYS FUEL SUPPLIES FOR CITY OF 1.5 MILLION. US BOMBING CAUSED THOUSANDS OF PEASANTS TO STREAM INTO CITY TO ESCAPE COUNTRYSIDE DESTRUCTION. TREASTER REPORTS WESTERN DIPLOMATS IN PP BELIEVE COMMUNISTS NOT LIKELY OVERRUN CITY BUT WANT APPLY SUFFICIENT PRESSURE TO TOPPLE LON NOL GOVERNMENT. GVN SOURCES SAY REMAINING SHIPS IN ORIGINAL EIGHTEEN- VESSEL CONVOY TO PP WILL MAKE ANOTHER EFFORT TO GO UP MEKONG TODAY WITH HEAVY US TACAIR AND B-52 SUPPORT. CINCPAC ANNOUNCES US AIR OPS AGAINST COMMUNIST- HELD LOCS AROUND PP (NYT). AP (SUN) REPORTS SKIPPER OF ONE SHIP THAT GOT THROUGH CREDITS US AIR SUPPORT, SAYING SOME FIGHTER- BOMBERS STRUCK CLOSE AS 1000 FEET AHEAD OF VESSEL.

2. CSM'S SOUTHERLAND IN PP SAYS US AIR POWER BEING SUBSTITUTED FOR KHMER MANPOWER IN EFFORT THAT " SEEMS TO HAVE FALLEN FAR SHORT OF SUCCESS." CRITICAL NATURE OF FIGHTING REFLECTED IN HAIG'S VISIT, HE SAYS. IN RECENT WEEKS, FANK HAS SHOWN LESS AND LESS WILLINGNESS TO FIGHT.

IN CONTRAST, DISSIDENTS FIGHTING BETTER AND FREQUENTLY WITHOUT NVA HELP. BAD FANK MORALE DEMONSTRATED IN INCREASING LOOTING.

3. CSM'S STROUT REMINDS THAT IN PAST, WHEN FACED WITH DIFFICULTIES AND TESTS OF HIS POWER AND PRESTIGE, PRESIDENT HAS REACTED VIGOROUSLY AND WITHOUT WARNING, SUGGESTING HE MAY DO SO AGAIN. STROUT REMINDS THAT SEN. AIKEN WARNED OVER WEEKEND IF COMMUNISTS " PERSIST IN PURSUING THE WAR, THEY MUST EXPECT A REACTIVATION OF SOME US MILITARY ACTIVITY. THAT PRESIDENT NIXON MAKES CLEAR."

4. THIEU, ON " FACE THE NATION," EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT KHMER SITUATION, SAYING IF IT GETS WORSE, WOULD BE " VERY GREAT DANGER, FOR SVN. DESPITE THIS, HE SAYS " I THINK THAT WE ARE CAPABLE TO DEFEND OUR COUNTRY
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 065477

FROM THE BORDER" WITHOUT US MILITARY INTERVENTION IF CAMBODIA WERE TO FALL (NYT, WP).

5. POST'S GREENWAY SEES GENERAL MALAISE IN PP; PEOPLE LOST CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES, THEIR GOVERNMENT AND COUNTRY. IN SOME RESPECTS, GOVERNMENT HAS ALMOST CEASED TO FUNCTION, CORRUPTION IS RAMPANT AND POPULAR DISSATISFACTION INCREASINGLY BEING FOCUSED AGAINST LON BROTHERS. SOME ELEMENTS IN ARMY WOULD LIKE TO SEE SIRIK MATAK GIVEN POWER. TWO OF COUNTRY'S FOUR

DIVISIONS-- SEVENTH AND SECOND-- MIGHT BACK HIM IN POWER STRUGGLE. BUT US COMMITMENT IN CAMHODIA HAS GROWN INEXORABLY TO POINT " WHERE IT WOULD BE HARD TO FIND ANOTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD SO TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON U. S."

6. SIHANOUK SAYS HE AND WIFE VISITED CAMBODIAN " LIBERATED AREAS" FOR SIX WEEKS, TRAVELLING IN CONVOY WITH NORTH VIETS. HIS ENEMIES, HE TELLS AFP HANOI, " HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT I WOULD NOT OR I COULD NOT GO THERE. NOW IT HAS BEEN DONE." SIHANOUK INDICATED KHMER RESISTANCE FORCES UNITED FOLLOWING HIS CONTACTS WITH LEADERS DURING HIS VISIT (NYT, WP).

7. ALL PAPERS FRONTPAGE PRG ADMISSION IT SHOT DOWN ICCS CHOPPER IN " REGRETTABLE ACCIDENT" KILLING ALL NINE ON BOARD. OTHER DOWNED CHOPPER MADE " SAFE LANDING" NEARBY. VC SPOKESMAN SAYS CRAFT WERE AT FAULT BECAUSE THEY HAD NOT FOLLOWED PRESCRIBED AIR CORRIDOR. NYT'S BUTTERFIELD REPORTS CANADIANS PRIVATELY FURIOUS AT VC FOR NOT ALLOWING INSPECTION OF CRASH SITE.

CANADIAN SOURCE SAYS LAST RADIO SIGNAL FROM CHOPPER SAID, " I'VE BEEN HIT BY A MISSILE AND I'M GOING DOWN." SUNDAY, CANADIAN ELEMENT OF ICCS ISSUED STATEMENT SAYING: " MOST DISTRESSINGLY, THE PRG HAVE NOT YET GRANTED PERMISSION TO THE ICCS TO CONDUCT A SEARCH- AND- RESCUE MISSION." AP (WP) REPORTS MONDAY THAT COMMUNIST FORCES FIRED ON TWO MORE CHOPPERS, DAMAGING ONE BADLY AND CAUSING IT TO LAND. IT CARRIED MEMBERS OF TPJMC. TRUDEAU ANNOUNCES CANADA WON'T PULL OUT OF ICCS, WHILE SHARP SAYS INCIDENT RAISES QUESTION UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 065477

OF WHETHER ENTIRE ICCS SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN.

8. LATIMES (APR. 6) MAINTAINS " THERE CAN BE NO LEGITIMATE REASON" TO CONCEAL FROM AMERICAN PUBLIC WHAT U. S. IS DOING IN CAMBODIA AND WHERE OUR ACTIONS WILL LEAD; BUT WE RECEIVE ONLY " SECRECY, EVASIONS, CONTRADICTIONS AND AMBIGUITIES." IF PRESIDENT " INTENDS TO GO BACK IN WITH BOMBERS AND FIGHTERS WHENEVER AND WHEREVER THE SHOOTING GOES ON, HE SHOULD TELL THE NATION AND ASK CONGRESS FOR AUTHORITY."

9. RICHARD WILSON (S- N, APR. 6) THINKS NIXON'S " DETERMINATION IN CAMBODIA IS PROBABLY CORRECTLY ASSESSED" AS MEASURE OF WHAT HE MAY DO IN VN IF NVA INFILTRATION CONTINUES. OBSERVES ALSO THAT SAN CLEMENTE COMMUNIQUE SHOWS PRESIDENT INTENDS GOING BEYOND ASSURING SVN MERE RIGHT TO EXIST AND NOW DESIRES MAKE SVN INTO

ANOTHER SOUTH KOREA -- GOVERNMENT SO STABLE AND SECURE THAT IT WOULD ATTRACT FOREIGN INVESTMENT. SAYS ALL THESE FACTORS BRING INTO QUESTION NIXON'S REAL INTENTIONS IN INDOCHINA. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT HAS BEEN " BETTER JUDGE OF HOW FAR HE CAN GO THAN THOSE WHO DEMAND THAT HE CEASE ALL OPERATIONS IN INDOCHINA."

10. ERNEST CONINE (LAT, APR. 6) DENOUNCES " GULLIBILITY" OF FONDA AND CLARK ON COMMUNISTS' TREATMENT OF U. S. POWS, AND DEMANDS PUBLIC APOLOGY.

11. ARBUCKLE (S- N, APR. 6), IN VIENTIANE, REPORTS U. S. IS CONTINUING PREPARATIONS TO WITHDRAW FROM LAOS ALTHOUGH COMMUNISTS HAVE NOT IMPLEMENTED LAOS OR PARIS AGREEMENT; HOWEVER, U. S. " IS NOT TECHNICALLY UNDER ANY CONSTRAINT TO WITHDRAW AT THIS TIME." FINDING U. S. EMBASSY OFFICIALS CAUTIOUS ABOUT DISCUSSING WITHDRAWAL DETAILS, SUGGESTS THAT " EVIDENTLY, EMBASSY OFFICIALS DISLIKE BEING REMINDED OF THE DEEP U. S. INVOLVEMENT IN LAOS, WHICH SO FAR HAS COST AT LEAST 800 AMERICAN LIVES AND BILLIONS OF TAXPAYERS' DOLLARS."

12. HARRIS SURVEY (WP) FOR PERIOD BETWEEN MARCH 15-21 SHOWS PRESIDENT CONTINUING TO MAKE HIGH OVERALL RATING FOR PERFORMANCE (59 PERCENT TO 39 PERCENT). FAVORABLE UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 065477

PUBLIC REACTION TO PRESIDENT FOR BRINGING HOME TROOPS AND POWS, AS WELL AS FOR FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES, OUTWEIGHS GROWING DOUBTS ABOUT PERFORMANCE IN DOMESTIC MATTERS. 70 PERCENT REACTED FAVORABLY TO BRINGING VN WAR TO CLOSE, 28 NEGATIVELY.

13. CSM' S SAIKOWSKI SEES SENATE MOVE TO FOR0 ID AID TO HANOI UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS AS SIGNIFICANT ON TWO COUNTS: REFLECTS UNEQUIVOCAL MOOD IN CONGRESS TO REGAIN CONTROL OVER DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENT; APPEARS TO SIGNAL THAT WITH RETURN OF POWS, CONGRESS FEELS NO PRESSURE TO FUND REBUILDING OF NVN. STRENGTH OF LEGISLATIVE SENTIMENT IS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE. MEANWHILE, THIEU MADE FAVORABLE IMPRESSION ON CONGRESS AS HE STRESSED NEED FOR ECON ASSISTANCE.

14. CSM' S SHELDON SEES PRESIDENT APPLYING PRESSURE FOR DE FACTO C- F IN CAMBODIA THROUGH EVERY AVAILABLE DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL SINCE THERE IS LITTLE ADMINISTRATION CAN MILITARILY DO TO FORCE NVA WITHDRAWAL, BEYOND CURRENT BOMBING, WHICH WOULD NOT RISK GREATER LOSS OF US LIVES. DISCREET MENTION OF DIPLOMATIC OPTIONS BY OFFICIALS INDICATES THAT PRESSURE BEING PUT ON HANOI. US IS TELLING HANOI THAT IF IT DOES NOT WITHDRAW FROM

LAOS AND CAMBODIA, IT WILL FORFEIT BOTH US ECON AID AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ROLE IN SVN GOVERNMENT. DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES WITH PRC AND USSR HAVE BEEN INTENSE FOR WEEKS. ONE REASON FOR QUIET DIPLOMACY IS DOUBT IN CONGRESS THAT PRESIDENT HAS AUTHORITY TO ORDER BOMBING IN CAMBODIA AFTER C- F AGREEMENT. POSSIBLE THAT SVN TROOPS CAN BE SENT INTO CAMBODIA, OR THAT THAI FORCES COULD BE USED CLANDESTINELY IN LAOS.

15. PETER REHAK (SUN) IN OTTAWA WRITES THAT CANADA MADE AGONIZING DECISION TO EXTEND PARTICIPATION IN ICCS. FACT THAT ISSUE HAS SO FAR CAUSED NO MAJOR TROUBLE IN PARLIAMENT FOR TRUDEAU' S MINORITY GOVERNMENT IS TRIBUTE TO SKILLFUL PRESENTATION OF CANADA' S DILEMMA BY SHARP. ALSO, VN TOUCHES RAW NERVE OF ANTI- AMERICANISM AND THERE IS WIDELY- SHARED DISILLUSIONMENT AND FRUSTRATION WITH CANADA' S LAST PEACE- KEEPING EFFORT IN 1954. WIDELY PUBLISHED ALLEGATION THAT US HAD TRICKED CANADA INTO UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 065477

TAKING PART IN NEW TRUCE EFFORT MUST BE SEEN IN THIS CONTEXT. APPEARS LITTLE REASON FOR US RESORT TO SUCH TACTICS, SINCE SUBTLE PRESSURE COULD HAVE BEEN USED. REHAK CITES REASONS TO BELIEVE NO TRICKERY WAS INVOLVED. ROGERS

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